

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

LOWER THE PRICE OF GASOLINE AT THE PUMP

(Mr. MCHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, my constituents in western North Carolina and my neighbors and I are really upset about what's happening at the price of gasoline at the pumps.

What we see out of this administration and what we see out of some extreme environmentalists is an unwillingness to tap our natural resources to relieve the price at the pumps today. We've seen out of this administration Solyndra. We've seen scandal after scandal with this green energy policy lending coming out of the stimulus from a couple of years ago and out of liberal policies in Washington.

What my constituents want to see is real exploration so that we can lower the price at the pumps. That's what we deserve, and that's an action that I ask this administration to take.

REPUBLICAN PLAN TO END MEDICARE

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, here we go again. This week, the House will vote on yet another Republican plan to end Medicare as we know it.

America's seniors have given a lifetime of service to our Nation. They deserve better than to be left out in the cold.

If it becomes law, the Republican budget will end the Medicare guarantee of secure health coverage for our seniors and replace Medicare with a voucher system that would, instead, give our seniors a premium support payment.

Even worse, the Republican budget gives new tax breaks to millionaires, billionaires, and Big Oil companies. Economists agree the Republican budget plan would destroy 4.1 million American jobs by the end of 2014.

Last year the American people weren't fooled by the dangerous and unfair House Republican budget. If it didn't work the first time, it's not going to work this time.

Let us work together on a bipartisan budget that does not favor the super-rich over seniors and the middle class.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET

(Mr. SMITH of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss the

budget, contrasting the Republican plan, which would actually strengthen and extend Medicare, and the President's plan that would actually maybe allow Medicare to go bankrupt only 2 years later than it would otherwise.

One particular provision in the President's budget, a cut in reimbursement to critical access hospitals, would endanger access to nearby hospital care for millions of seniors, including those served by the 48 critical access facilities in Nebraska's Third District.

However, the Republican budget provides an alternative which ensures access to care without relying on arbitrary cuts. Our plan would also focus future Federal support on the sick and poor, while ensuring no change for those at or near retirement.

Madam Speaker, inaction now will only guarantee Medicare is more problematic in future years. We must act now to ensure it remains solvent for those who depend on it most.

POSTAL SERVICE FACILITY CLOSURE PROCESS

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my deep concerns about the postal service's facility closure process.

Testimony at a recent Postal Regulatory Commission hearing brought to light details of a study kept secret because it projected billions of dollars in losses, despite facility closures. It also revealed mail volume would take a huge hit due to service standard changes.

Yet the postal service has no plans to change its course, further proof that the postal service is operating under an ill-conceived "decide now, justify later" strategy.

The Buffalo Mail Processing Facility recently developed a training session for postal employees that is now the template for a national model. Surprisingly, this facility is scheduled for closing. It doesn't make any sense.

My colleague GERRY CONNOLLY is asking the postal service to release the full results from the study, and I agree. We should not—and cannot—stand by and watch these facilities close without taking all facts into account.

THE JOB-KILLING EPA MUST BE STOPPED

(Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, President Obama's job-killing EPA is at it again. Last year, the EPA proposed a rule on manganese alloy production that would close down the last two manganese alloy production facilities in America, costing over 500 direct American jobs and thousands of indirect jobs. One of the facilities is in my hometown of Marietta, Ohio.

These manganese alloys are vital raw components to the steel industry and are used in a wide variety of industries, including defense and the automotive industry, just to name two.

The proposed EPA rule would require scientifically unproven and costly process controls to be installed on the two facilities, and the EPA has ignored the warnings that if the proposed rule is finalized it will not be economically feasible for these plants to continue to operate.

Furthermore, if this rule is finalized, American steel companies will be forced to import this vital raw material from China or other foreign sources.

Today I will begin work with my House colleagues to ensure the EPA does not go forward with this job-killing rule.

STAND BEHIND OUR VETERANS

(Mr. WALZ of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring an important concern to my colleagues. Every one of us here has a sacred commitment to care for those warriors who are willing to serve us overseas, and one of our major concerns is making sure they're employed when they return back home.

What's alarming is the Department of Defense recently issued a change in their policy that will undermine our ability to do that. I'm referring to the Department of Defense Post-Deployment Mobilization Respite Account. This important policy is designed to give our brave warriors sufficient time to transition back into the private sector. PDMRA, as it's called, is an important tool that gives them that opportunity.

The change by the DOD reduces the number of paid transition days that were promised to our men and women after they deploy to the war zone. Halfway through, for many of them, their third or fourth deployment, DOD is now taking that back when their plans were set this spring when they returned home. While they're in Iraq and Afghanistan, that is certainly not the right thing to do.

Every single one of us wants to balance the budget and must focus us on that, simply not on the backs of veterans and warriors serving this Nation.

I ask my colleagues to join me in asking the Department of Defense to reverse course on this policy, hire our veterans, and keep our moral commitment to them.

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HONORING DR. JEROL SWAIM FOR 48 YEARS OF SERVICE TO WILLIAMS BAPTIST COLLEGE

(Mr. CRAWFORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)